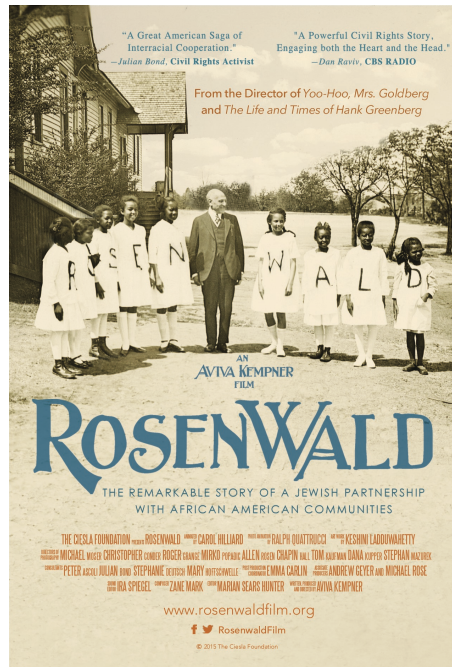


The Ciesla Foundation

presents

a film by Aviva Kempner



**From the award winning director of
The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg and
*Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg***

www.rosenwaldfilm.org

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Short Synopsis

Aviva Kempner's ***Rosenwald*** is the incredible story of Julius Rosenwald, who never finished high school, but rose to become the President of Sears. Influenced by the writings of the educator Booker T. Washington, this Jewish philanthropist joined forces with African American communities during the Jim Crow South to build over 5,300 schools during the early part of the 20th century.

Inspired by the Jewish ideals of *tzedakah* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), and a deep concern over racial inequality in America, Julius Rosenwald used his wealth to become one of America's most effective philanthropists. Because of his modesty, Rosenwald's philanthropy and social activism are not well known today. He gave away \$62million in his lifetime.

Synopsis

Aviva Kempner's ***Rosenwald*** is the incredible story of Julius Rosenwald, the son of an immigrant peddler who never finished high school, but rose to become the President of Sears. Influenced by the writings of the educator Booker T. Washington, this Jewish philanthropist joined forces with African American communities during the Jim Crow South to build over 5,300 schools during the early part of the 20th century.

Rosenwald sheds light on this silent partner of the Pre-Civil Rights Movement. Rosenwald awarded fellowship grants to a who's who of African American intellectuals and artists of his day so that they could pursue their scholarship and art. They included: Marian Anderson, James Baldwin, the father and uncle of civil rights leader Julian Bond, Ralph Bunche, W. E. B. DuBois, Katherine Dunham, Ralph Ellison, John Hope Franklin, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Gordon Parks, Jacob Lawrence and Augusta Savage along with Woody Guthrie.

Inspired by the Jewish ideals of *tzedakah* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and a deep concern over racial inequality in America, Julius Rosenwald used his wealth to become one of America's most effective philanthropists. Rosenwald also built YMCAs and housing for African Americans to address the pressing needs of the Great Migration. Because of his modesty, Rosenwald's philanthropy and social activism are not well known today. He gave away \$62 million in his lifetime.

The list of prominent alumni and educators who attended the Rosenwald Schools include Tony Award winning playwright George Wolfe, poet Maya Angelou, U.S. Representative John Lewis, Pulitzer Prize winner Eugene Robinson of The Washington Post and the ancestors of Loretta Lynch (US Attorney General) and law professor Anita Hill. Skip Gates writes in *Finding Oprah's Roots: Finding Your Own* that Oprah's ancestor Amanda Bullocks became a trustee of the Buffalo Rosenwald School in Attala County, Mississippi.

Interviewees

Maya Angelou; Peter Ascoli - Rosenwald's grandson and biographer; Julian Bond; Rep. Danny Davis; Rita Dove; Benjamin Jealous; Rep. John Lewis; journalists Clarence Page, Eugene Robinson, and Cokie Roberts; Ambassador David Saperstein, Eleanor Roosevelt Seagraves and Anna Seagraves First-granddaughter and great granddaughter, respectively, of Rosenwald Fund board member Eleanor Roosevelt; George Wolfe.

Timeline

May 12, 1854 Samuel Rosenwald, father of Julius, arrives in America from Germany.

August 12, 1862 Birth of Julius Rosenwald in Springfield, Illinois.

1879 Julius Rosenwald goes to New York City to serve as an apprentice in the clothing business.

1884 Julius Rosenwald starts own clothing business with his brother in Chicago.

1886 Sears, Roebuck and Company founded.

1890 Julius Rosenwald marries Augusta (Gussie) Nusbaum, daughter of a German immigrant who is also in the clothing business.

August 13, 1895 Richard Sears sells half of the company Sears, Roebuck & Co. to Julius Rosenwald and his brother-in-law, Aaron Nusbaum, for \$75,000.

1901 Richard Sears and Julius Rosenwald buy out Nusbaum's shares in the company.

1906 Richard Sears and Julius Rosenwald take Sears, Roebuck & Co. public. Julius Rosenwald's friend Henry Goldman, of Goldman Sachs & Co., handles the offering.

1910 Rosenwald offers \$25,000 to help build a YMCA for African-Americans to any city that can raise \$75,000 for that purpose.

1910 Rosenwald reads *Up From Slavery* and *An American Citizen: The Life of William H. Baldwin Jr.*

October 24, 1911 Julius Rosenwald travels to Tuskegee with wife Gussie, Rabbi Emile Hirsch and others in a Pullman car.

December 1911 Julius Rosenwald joins the Board of Directors of the Tuskegee Institute.

August, 1912 Rosenwald gives \$25,000 to Tuskegee as a gift in honor of his 50th Birthday and Booker T Washington asks the funds be used to build rural schools.

1913-1914 Six rural schools for African-Americans in Alabama are built with funding from Julius Rosenwald, under the supervision of Dr. Washington. The following year, eighty more are built in Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia.

November 14, 1915 Booker T. Washington dies and is buried in a brick tomb built by his students at the Tuskegee Institute.

October 31, 1917 Julius Rosenwald charts the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

1920 School building program headquarters moved from Tuskegee to Fisk University.

December 1, 1927 Edwin R. Embree hired as president of Rosenwald Fund.

1928 The Rosenwald Fund Fellowship Program is begun to provide grants to talented African Americans and white Southerners in various fields.

1929 Rosenwald's Michigan Boulevard Garden Apartments open on Chicago's south side.

January 6, 1932 Julius Rosenwald dies in his sleep.

1933 The last Rosenwald School is constructed. Over 5,300 have been built.

April 19, 1941 Eleanor Roosevelt, new trustee at the Rosenwald Fund, takes a ride in a biplane with a Tuskegee flight instructor. This publicity stunt helped Blacks gain the right to serve in the Air Force.

1948 Under Julius Rosenwald's direction to close 25 years after his death, The Rosenwald Fund ends, having spent down its assets several years early.

Importance of Schools

What did it mean to a community to have a Rosenwald School? At the time, most public rural black schools-- if there were schools at all-- were run-down buildings with few, if any, amenities. If the county didn't provide a public building, the children learned in lodge halls and churches. To have a school and educators meant that the next generation would have a chance to move away from the often grinding poverty found in such areas, and not be solely dependent upon the land for sustenance. From 1915 to 1932, over 660,000 Southern black schoolchildren benefited from an initiative that truly speaks to the American Dream. The partnership between Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington and the African American communities to build schools was perhaps the most inspiring story during the hardships of the Jim Crow era.

Biographies

Aviva Kempner

Director, Writer, Producer

Aviva Kempner has a mission in life: Her films investigate non-stereotypical images of Jews in history and celebrate the untold stories of Jewish heroes. She conceived of and produced *Partisans of Vilna*, a documentary on Jewish resistance against the Nazis, produced and directed Peabody-winning and Emmy nominated *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, about the Jewish slugger who fought anti-Semitism in the 1930's and 40's, and produced and directed *Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg*, a humorous and eye-opening story of television pioneer Gertrude Berg.

Two of her previous films have grossed over a million dollars at the box office. *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* grossed over \$1.7 million while *Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg* grossed over \$1.2 million.

Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg won a CINE Golden Eagle and festival audience awards and Women's Film Critics Circle posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award winner for Gertrude Berg. *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* was awarded Audience Awards at the Hamptons International Film Festival and Washington Jewish Film Festival; Spirit Award for Best Sports Documentary, International Sports Video and Film Awards; top honors from the National Society of Film Critics, the National Board of Review, the New York Film Critics Circle and Broadcast Film Critics Association. It also won a CINE Golden Eagle and George Peabody Award.

Partisans of Vilna was the winner of a CINE Golden Eagle and the Anthropolos First Prize, and received an American Film Festival honorable mention.

And now from Aviva Kempner comes ***Rosenwald***, a feature-length historical documentary about businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. This historical partnership as well as the modern-day attempts to restore the schools is an inspiring story of philanthropy and local self-determination.

Kempner lives in Washington, DC where she plays a prominent role in the artist and film community. She started the Washington Jewish Film Festival in 1990. She is also an activist for voting rights for the District of Columbia. Kempner is the child of a Holocaust survivor and US army officer and was born in Berlin after WWII.

Her many accomplishments include: recipient of the 1996 Guggenheim Fellowship and the 2000 DC Mayor's Art Award: 2001 Women of Vision award from D.C.'s Women in Film and Video chapter, the 2001 Media Arts award from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and the 2009 San Francisco Jewish Film Festival's Freedom of Expression Awardee.

She writes film criticism and feature articles for numerous publications, including The Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, Crystal City Magazine, The Forward, Baltimore Jewish Times, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Legal Times, The Wrap, Washington Jewish Week and The Washington Post.

She has written chapters in these various books: God, Faith and Identity in the Ashes: Perspectives of Children and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors, Hammerin' Hank Greenberg: Call Him the Hero of Heroes, When You Need A Little Lift: But Don't Want To Eat Chocolate, Pay a Shrink, or Drink a Bottle of Gin, Jews and American Popular Culture, What Israel Means to Me, Daughters of Absence, and many more.

Marian Sear Hunter - Editor

Marian Sears Hunter is an editor of many award winning films including Kempner's *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*, *Bad Blood: A Cautionary Tale*, *Harlem In Montmartre*, *Zora Neale Hurston: Jump At The Sun*, *Marcel Proust; a Writer's Life*, *Slavery and the Making of America*, one show in a four part PBS series about slavery, *Long Way From Home*, *School: The Story of American Public Education*, *To Be Somebody*, part of *The Great Depression* produced by Blackside and *Promises to Keep*, nominated for an Academy Award.

Zane Mark -Composer

Zane Mark is a composer, orchestrator and arranger with credits in a wide range of musical arenas in addition to his distinguished Broadway career. He co-wrote the Tony and Grammy-award nominated music for the award-winning musical *Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk*. Mark most recently served as the Musical Director for Broadway's *Holler If Ya Hear Me*. Some of his other Broadway credits include *Motown The Musical*, *Pippin*, *Leap of Faith*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, and *The Full Monty*. Mark also was a musical contributor for the film, *The Dancer Chronicles* and HBO's *Lackawanna Blues*.

Aviva Kempner's Director's Statement

For the past 36 years, my goal has been to make documentaries about under known Jewish heroes that counter negative stereotypes.

I decided to make a film on Julius Rosenwald when I heard Julian Bond speak about his family's connection to the businessman and philanthropist 12 years ago at the Hebrew Center on Martha's Vineyard. I was immediately intrigued by Rosenwald's story of being an enlightened businessman who wanted to *repair the world*. The son of a German immigrant peddler, Rosenwald had humble beginnings and left high school to follow in his family's business. Taking a business risk he bought into Sears and Roebuck with a relative and rose to become the President by age 45.

I was impressed that making money was not his only goal in life. Rosenwald was inspired by the Jewish ideals of *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* as espoused by his rabbi Emil Hirsch, so he decided to implement grants that focused on racial inequality in America.

He utilized matching grants as a vehicle for change. Rosenwald partnered with African-American communities in the South to build over 5,300 schools for them during the early part of the 20th century, as well as established the Rosenwald Fund, which awarded grants to a who's who of African-American intellectuals and artists of his day so that they could pursue their scholarship and art.

Imagine what a difference these schools made. At the time, most public rural black schools were run-down with few amenities (if there were schools at all). With the addition of Rosenwald Schools, the next generation of

African-Americans would have a chance to move away from the often grinding poverty found in such areas, and not be solely dependent upon the land for sustenance.

Rosenwald Schools were a household name in the Deep South. A portrait of Rosenwald would often hang on a schoolhouse wall along the side of Abraham Lincoln. This was especially poignant to Rosenwald since he was born in Springfield, Illinois and grew up in a house across from Lincoln's home. His uncles had clothed Lincoln and one of them escorted Lincoln's casket back to Springfield.

I was so impressed how the Rosenwald Fund helped artists and scholars early in their careers. The Rosenwald Fund awarded grants to African-Americans and white Southerners in order to give them one to three years to concentrate on their work and develop their abilities. The fellowships ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,000, a considerable amount during the Great Depression. Among the grant recipients were Marian Anderson, the father and uncle of civil rights leader Julian Bond, Ralph Bunche, W. E. B. DuBois, Woody Guthrie, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Gordon Parks, James Baldwin, Jacob Lawrence and Augusta Savage. Their accomplishments are American treasures.

I greatly admire Rosenwald's philanthropy. He gave away \$62 million to various causes, which in today's dollars is closer to \$1 billion. I felt that this story was too important to go unnoticed. It is a great Jewish legacy that I am excited to make better known. At a time when financial hardships abound and civil rights issues unfortunately still exist, it is imperative that Julian Rosenwald's story be told now. It is a vital part of the great story of Jewish and African American partnership.

Interviewees

MAYA ANGELOU (Author)
PETER ASCOLI (Grandson and Biographer)
HOWARD BERMAN (Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Sinai)
TIMUEL BLACK (Historian)
JULIAN BOND (Civil Rights Activist)
TANYA BOWERS (Director of Diversity, National Trust for Historic Preservation)
BARBARA BOWMAN (Daughter of Robert Rochon Taylor)
FRANK BRINKLEY (Educator)
PHILIP BROOKMAN (Curator)
BILL BUCKNER (Graphic Artist)
A'LELIA BUNDLES (Author)
KINSHASHA HOLMAN CONWILL (Deputy Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture)
REP. DANNY DAVIS (D-IL)
OSSIE DAVIS (Actor)
STEPHANIE DEUTSCH (Biographer)
HASIA DINER (History Professor)
NORRIS DODSON (Co-founder, Thurgood Marshall Center)
RITA DOVE (Poet)
RICHARD DOZIER (Tuskegee University)
DAVID DRISKELL (Artist)
LAURANITA DUGAS (Daughter of Robert Rochon Taylor)
ELI EVANS (Author)
BENJAMIN JEALOUS (Past President, NAACP)
ANNA SEAGRAVES FIERST (Great Granddaughter of Eleanor Roosevelt)
JOHN FRANKLIN, JR. (Son of John Hope Franklin)
GERALD GOLDEN (Educator)
ALMA HACKETT (Educator)
KENNETH HAMILTON (Historian)
ANNE HESS (Great Granddaughter)
LESTER MAE HILL (Nurse)
MARY HOFFSCHWELLE (Historian)
CHARLENE DREW JARVIS (Daughter of Dr. Charles Drew)

GARY KRIST (Author)
DAVID LEVERING LEWIS (Historian)
REP. JOHN LEWIS (D-GA)
E. ETHELBERT MILLER (Poet and Educator)
STEVEN NASATIR (President, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago)
ANDY NORTH (Museum of Science and Industry)
CLARENCE PAGE (Columnist, Chicago Tribune)
LISA PAGE (English Professor)
GORDON PARKS (Photographer)
ALFRED PERKINS (Author)
DR. RICHARD POWELL (Duke University)
NEWELL QUINTON (Civil Servant)
DWANDALYN REECE (Curator, National Museum of African American History and Culture)
COKIE ROBERTS (Journalist)
EUGENE ROBINSON (Columnist, The Washington Post)
GILBERT ROCHON (Past President, Tuskegee University)
ALICE ROSENWALD (Granddaughter)
RABBI DAVID SAPERSTEIN (Reform Jewish Leader)
DANIEL SCHULMAN (Curator)
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT SEAGRAVES (Granddaughter of Eleanor Roosevelt)
JACQUELYN SERWER (Curator, National Museum of African American History and Culture)
ELSA SMITHGALL (Curator, The Phillips Collection)
DAVID STERN (Great Grandson)
DONALD STEWART (Educator)
ROBERT STEWART (National Park Service Ranger)
ELIZABETH ROSENWALD VARET (Granddaughter)
KENNETH WARREN (English Professor)
GORDON WEIL (Author)
GEORGE WOLFE (Director)

Credits

THE CIESLA FOUNDATION presents ROSENWALD
WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED by Aviva Kempner
EDITOR Marian Sears Hunter
COMPOSER Zane Mark
SOUND EDITOR Ira Spiegel
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS Andrew Geyer and Michael Rose
POST PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Emma Carlin
CONSULTANTS Peter Ascoli, Julian Bond, Stephanie Deutsch, Mary Hoffschwelle
DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY Michael Moser, Christopher Conder, Roger Grange, Mirko Popadic, Allen
Rosen, Chapin Hall, Tom Kaufman, Dana Kupper, Stephan Mazurek
PHOTO ANIMATION Ralph Quattrucci
ANIMATOR Carol Hilliard
ARTWORK Keshini Ladduwahetty

Questions & Answers

What was your inspiration to become a filmmaker?

Researching my own family roots in 1979 inspired me to become a filmmaker. I am dedicated to making films that span the years prior to and during World War II, since they so scarred my family.

What is your family background?

My Polish-born, Jewish mother passed as a Catholic working at a labor camp within Germany. Her parents and sister perished in Auschwitz and only her brother survived the death camps.

Upon liberation by Americans my mother met my Lithuanian-born father, a US soldier, in Berlin. My father's mother had been shot by the Nazis. They married, and upon birth I was anointed the first American-Jewish child born in Berlin. We came to America in 1950 and settled in Detroit. My father, who immigrated to America in the late 1920s, made me aware of our country's hardships during the Depression and the social discrimination against Jews and other minorities.

What is the background of your previous films?

As a teenager I fantasized about fighting Nazis. In 1979, I felt an urge to make a film about Jewish resistance against the Nazis to answer the unfair question, "why didn't Jews resist?" I produced and conceived of *Partisans of Vilna* to show Jews had fought despite the moral dilemmas. It was released in theaters in 1986, and on DVD 20 years later. I formed a nonprofit foundation, naming it Ciesla after my maternal grandparents' last name to keep the name alive.

I chose Hank Greenberg, my father's baseball hero, as the subject of *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*. Every Yom Kippur our father would tell us how Greenberg went to synagogue instead of the stadium. I believed Greenberg was part of Kol Nidre service. I was sick of seeing only *nebbish* Jewish males on the screen. Due to the difficulty in raising funds, it took 13 long years to make. The Ciesla Foundation issued a new DVD of the film in 2013 that includes over two and a half hours of extras.

I am also proud to have made a film on radio and television pioneer Gertrude Berg. She was the creator, principal writer, and star of *The Goldbergs*, a popular radio show for 17 years, which became television's very first character-driven domestic sitcom in 1949. Berg received the first Best Actress Emmy in history, and paved the way for women in the entertainment industry. She was the most famous woman of her day, but almost forgotten when I made the movie about her. She paved the way for the *Honeymooners*, *I Love Lucy*, *Seinfeld*, and *Friends*.

What do you see as the similarities between Hank Greenberg and Julius Rosenwald?

What I realize now is that although both Hammerin' Hank Greenberg and Julius Rosenwald's careers spanned the years when our country faced the enormous challenges of the Great Depression and World War II, they both displayed great courage in performing as positive Jews in spite of the negative atmosphere swirling around them. Most of all, they were heroes to all Americans.

Closing thoughts on your films.

I feel privileged to have spent the last 36 years making documentaries about such powerful heroic Jewish figures. I love how three generations can come together to view my films. In retrospect, I believe that Jewish baby born in Berlin was put on this earth to document such affirmative celluloid history of Jewish heroes.